



MIGUEL ANGEL MORATINOS

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain

Dominique Moïsi, Special Advisor, Ifri

Thank you very much, Sergei. Last but not least, we have Miguel Angel Moratinos, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain. Should there one day be peace in the Middle East, historians will pay tribute to a man who worked passionately for the cause of peace over the last decade.

Miguel Angel Moratinos, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain

Historians will pay tribute to success.

Dominique Moïsi, Special Advisor, Ifri

Yes, if there is peace; that is what I said.

Miguel Angel Moratinos, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain

Unfortunately we are full of frustration. Thanks to Thierry and the organisers for giving us the opportunity to continue to debate the Middle East issue. Ambassador Wu, the Chinese Ambassador, started his intervention yesterday by saying there were four main issues in global governance, and the first one was the Middle East. When we are trying to identify the new reality of the Middle East in this new global world, we use new words like 'global', 'smart', 'green' with which we are becoming familiar, but there are two concepts that have to be applied to the Middle East, complexity and uncertainty.

That makes me think of the famous quotation of President Charles de Gaulle when he started his visit to the Middle East: "Je m'envole à un Levant complexe avec des idées simples" and what is happening is that we are trying to solve the Middle East with simple ideas, whereas maybe we have to come to it with complex ideas. I think the Middle East deserves all this time, because it is the quintessence of the new challenging world, where all traditional security concerns, traditional military intervention, energy and trade converge in the new challenges of today's world, which are global terrorism, food security, water scarcity, and culture division. That is why we are so preoccupied with what is going on.

My second reflection concerns what to do. There is a kind of international fatigue; everybody is fed up about the Middle East, and everybody is more fed up about the Palestinian-Israeli issue. The ones who believe in a future peace are considered idealists, people who come and still try to make peace in this region. Who should be responsible, the Arabs, the Israelis, Iran or Turkey? The so called West, Europe and America should ask themselves what has to be done. We can continue business as usual, which means what happened during the last four years, what I can qualify as bad diplomacy, military action using drones in the Middle East, drone diplomacy.

Mr Kerry tried his best with old methods and old approaches, but there is no strategy. I do not think we have to interfere, my dear friend, but I think we should have a strategy. Can we ask what the US strategy in the Middle East is? Maybe they have one. I have some doubts about the European strategy. Should we have a new strategy so that we



are not doing the same things, starting with Syria, then proposing how to stabilise Iraq, all on the defensive? The naughty guys, the worst of the worst, Prince Faisal said, are advancing. Look at how the Middle East was ten or even five years ago, and look at how it is today - it is worse and worse, so, my dear friend, we have to do something, not to interfere, but we have to do something in order to make a better future for the region and for all of us.

Therefore, I have two main proposals. The first, as His Highness Prince Faisal said, the number one priority is the Israeli-Palestinian issue. It is not because I have been involved in the Palestinian issue for many years; it is because it is the core, the heart, of the stability of the Middle East, and one of the reasons for the destabilisation from radicalism, from fanaticism, is because the people in the region will not continue to accept this double standard and this sense of frustration of not having the two state solution become a reality. How will we move to a two state solution? We all agree about the two state solution, and it has even been approved by the Security Council, but my dear Israeli friends, my dear American friends and some European friends are afraid to recognise a Palestinian state. They say they will only recognise after negotiation.

When Ben Gurion had the courage and vision to decide to create the State of Israel on 14 May 1948 and wrote a letter to the UN, did he negotiate with Palestinians? Why then do we make a Palestinian state a condition for negotiation? That is logical, but in the Middle East everything is illogical. It is okay; let us be illogical, and let us negotiate with Israel, but Israel has not been prepared to negotiate in previous years, so let the international community, at least the European Union, to take an initiative for once. This movement to recognise a Palestinian state should not just be for the sake of recognition, but has to be a diplomatic instrument, has to be an instrument that will mobilise the US to negotiate later on with the parties, and that will motivate the EU to push the double recognition process through the Arab Peace Initiative, for Islamic and Arab countries to recognise Israel, and for Israel, Europeans and Americans to recognise a Palestinian state.

My dear Meir, if you win the election, putting a framework and a deadline in place may not be necessary, but imagine that Netanyahu and his coalition win the election. What will we do? We cannot say there is no more hope, but we have to put on pressure, and say that if nothing happens in two years or a year and a half, if there is no serious negotiation, we in the international community, having committed to a two state solution, will recognise a Palestinian state. There will be two entities negotiating their disputes and differences at the level of states, not at the level of an entity and a state. That should be the first priority.

The second priority is about Iran. There has been a big misunderstanding about Iran, and we all agree that it is an adversary which has complicated our lives since the most difficult time of the Cold War, when the US and the Soviet Union decided to engage. My vision is that having tried to conduct nuclear negotiations only with Iran was a big mistake, because in the meantime, as you said, we have Iran in Gaza, we have Iran in Lebanon, we have Iran in Iraq, we have Iran in France, we have Iran everywhere. Therefore, we do not get any commitment on nuclear ability, and we have Iran everywhere, so let us put some containment and some engagement in place with Iran in a much broader sense.

I am not saying that negotiations on the nuclear issue should not continue, but to focus only on the nuclear issue will give Iran the capacity, as is happening, to expand their influence and their role in the whole region.